

# Swedish Freestyle Rules in English

Valid from 2022-01-01 through 2026-12-31

Översättning Alexandra Karlsson 2022

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# 1. General regulations for shows, trials, competitions and behavioral assessments

General regulations for shows, trials, competitions and behavioral assessments organized by Svenska Kennelklubben (SKK/the Swedish Kennel Club), provincial kennel clubs, breed clubs affiliated with SKK, and/or by breed clubs affiliated by agreement. In case of interpreting of the show regulations only the Swedish version is valid.

These regulations will apply from 1 January 2022 until 31 December 2026. Any changes required as a result of Swedish legislation or FCI regulations will be found at SKK's website [www.skk.se](http://www.skk.se).

The following General regulations apply to official (SKK Register) shows, trials, competitions and behavioral assessments arranged by Svenska Kennelklubben (SKK), by provincial kennel clubs and breed clubs affiliated with SKK, and by breed clubs affiliated by agreement. In addition, the applicable parts of SKK's rules and the regulations issued by authorities also apply.

## Introduction

Bringing dogs together for shows, trials, competitions and behavioral assessments places requirements on both the organizer and dog owners/handlers in order to be able to maintain good protection against infectious diseases and harm to humans, owners' own dogs and other animals.

The dog's welfare always takes top priority at all SKK events. It is also important that the results of judging are not affected by undue circumstances.

Participants and functionaries are obliged to act or perform in such a way that they do not harm or act against SKK or its member organizations, and not to act in such a way that they affect other dogs' chances of being judged fairly at shows, trials, competitions and behavioral assessments, and not to make disparaging comments about other dogs, officials or participants.

All dogs must be made available for the examinations and taking of samples that may be necessary in connection with checking for doping and other undue circumstances.

The arranging club or its officials are not responsible for any loss or damage during a show, test or competition. Neither are they responsible for any damage done by a dog during a show, test or competition unless the damage is proven to originate from negligence in the arrangement.

When a veterinary certificate is referred to for a dog, this must be issued on an SKK-approved form (e.g. Swedish Veterinary Association form F145 or equivalent). The following details must be included in order for the certificate to be accepted: breed, registered name, registration number, ID-number, description of injury, whether this has been acquired, what the intervention

relates to, action, reason for action and, if a body part has been removed, a comment on its appearance. An original copy of the certificate must always be brought to the show.

Certified copy is accepted as original.

Organizers are entitled to make copies of veterinary certificates.

Person may not enter or show dogs at shows, trials, competitions, behavioral assessments, or take part with a progeny group or breeders group, who:

- has been banned from handling and keeping animals by the authorities
- has been excluded by the SKK's Disciplinary Board from the SKK organization
- has been banned from taking part in shows, trials, competitions and behavioral assessments by SKK's Disciplinary Board, SKK Central Board, a Nordic kennel club or the FCI
- has chosen to leave the SKK organization during an ongoing investigation by SKK's Disciplinary Board.

Dog owners are responsible for dogs not being shown/handled by a person who has been excluded or has been banned from handling and keeping animals by the authorities or has left the SKK organization during an ongoing investigation by SKK's Disciplinary Board.

Dogs may not take part in shows, trials, competitions or behavioral assessments, which in the six months prior have been owned by a person who has been excluded or banned from entering, showing or letting another person show a dog at trial, competition or behavioral assessment by the SKK's Disciplinary Board.

A person that has been excluded or banned by the SKK's Central Board in accordance to SKK's statute § 9 has no right to enter the show, trial, competition, behavioral assessment or other arrangement venues.

Results awarded in official classes will be recorded by SKK. Only registered dogs can achieve a champion title.

## **1.1 Vaccinations**

Participating foreign dogs must be brought into Sweden in accordance with Swedish import requirements for dogs in relation to rabies vaccinations and deworming against tapeworms (echinococcosis). Participating dogs and other dogs that are allowed to enter the venue must be vaccinated against distemper as follows:

- Dogs under the age of one (1) year: at the age of at least ten (10) weeks.
- Dogs over the age of one (1) year: the dog must be vaccinated at the age of at least ten (10) months, and not more than four (4) years ago.
- First-time vaccination must be carried out at least fourteen (14) days before the day of the trial, competition and/or show.

Checks may be carried out to ensure that the applicable import and vaccination requirements have been followed.

In addition, SKK recommend that participating dogs are vaccinated against parvovirus infection and parainfluenza (kennel cough).

## 1.2 Identification number

Dogs must have an identification number in order to take part in show, trial, competition or behavioral assessment. The identification may be carried out by tattooing or with a microchip implant that complies with ISO standards 11784 and 11785.

At shows organized by the SKK General Committee or an SKK provincial kennel club, the organizer is responsible for providing a microchip scanner.

Identification checks may be carried out through random inspections.

## 1.3 Responsibility

During shows, trials, competitions and behavioral assessments, dog owners or their representatives are responsible in accordance with the Swedish Supervision of Dogs and Cats Act.

Those taking part in shows, trials, competitions and behavioral assessments are responsible for dogs being kept in such a way that they cannot harm themselves or others. Under no circumstances may dogs be kept in cars, dog cages, tents or similar in such conditions that they could come to harm. If the dog owner or their representative during the show, trial, competition, behavioral assessment or club organized activity keeps a dog in contravention of the above, they **shall** be reported by the functionary on duty to SKK on a specific form. Examples of functionaries are: organizing committee, show manager, veterinarian on duty, trial or competition leaders, judges, ring steward, instructor and as well figurant to trials. It is incumbent upon the organizer to ensure that the form is available at the event.

Physically punishing dogs is forbidden.

## 1.4 Force majeure

The organizer is not obliged to refund entry fees if the event is cancelled as a result of force majeure.

Neither SKK nor its member organizations are responsible for loss or direct or indirect costs caused as a result of an event not being held. Nor are elected representatives, employees or officials of SKK or its member organizations who have made a decision on such an event responsible for loss or direct or indirect costs.

## 1.5 Unacceptable behaviour

Dogs that demonstrate unacceptable behavior during shows, trials, competitions, behavioral assessments and other activities organized by a club within SKK by showing aggression, attacking or otherwise appearing to be threatening towards people and/or other dogs or domestic animals shall be reported on a specific form by the serving officials. Serving judges and officials **are obliged** to report to SKK in writing, using a specific form if a dog demonstrates unacceptable behavior in accordance with the regulations above. This applies even if the serving officials not self has witnessed the unacceptable behavioral of a dog. The organizing club is responsible for ensuring that this form is available at the event. Examples of officials include: Show committee members, show managers, veterinarians on duty, trial or competition organizers, ring stewards, instructors and figurants at trials.

Reported dog may be dismissed from the venue.

## **1.6 Prohibited from taking part in shows, trials and competitions**

### **Mental attributes**

Dogs that have been Disqualified or awarded 0 grade with regard to mental attributes on three (3) occasions are not entitled to take part. Serving judge obtain the right at all shows, trials, competitions and descriptions to hand out Disqualified referring to mentality if the judge assesses that the dog, based on the current show, trial, competition or behavioral assessment exhibits aggression or a clear tendency to flee in the ring, i.e. A dog which has panicked and shied away from the judge, and where it has not been possible to approach the dog in a natural manner.

### **Infectious diseases**

Dogs suffering from an infectious disease or infestation of vermin may not take part. Dogs may not take part if during the last month they have had or are suspected to have had distemper, parvovirus infection or kennel cough, or if during the last month they have been spending time with a dog that has had any of these diseases. Dogs may not take part earlier than two months after completing a period in quarantine.

### **Bitches in whelp and bitches rearing puppies**

Bitches in whelp may not take part in shows, trials, competitions, or behavioral assessments in the 30 days before whelping, calculated from 63 days after the first mating, and nor may they take part before 75 days after whelping, regardless the outcome of the whelping.

### **Puppies**

Puppies under the age of 4 months may not take part in shows, trials, competitions, or behavioral assessments and may not be brought into the venue. The organizing club defines what is regarded the venue.

### **Ear cropped dogs**

- Dogs born in a country where ear cropping was not allowed when it took place may not participate in a show, SBK conformation description, trial, competition or behavioral assessment.
- Dogs born in a country where ear cropping was permitted when it took place may participate in a show, trial, competition and behavioral assessments.

### **Dogs with docked tails and dogs that are not born with a natural full-length tail**

In these contexts dogs with amputated tails are treated as dogs with docked tails.

### **SHOWS**

May not participate in a show, SBK conformation description.

### **From this prohibition to participate in shows are the following three (3) exceptions:**

- a) Dogs born in Sweden, where tail docking was done for health reasons in order to remedy a postnatal acquired injury and where a certificate in accordance with what is stated in the introduction to the general rules can be shown in original, both at the

venue and subsequently **may participate** in shows, SBK conformation description, trials, competitions and behavioral assessments.

- b) Breeds from the FCI group 7 born in a country where tail docking was permitted when it took place, where tail docking was done for health reasons or dogs born with a non-naturally full-length tail **may participate**.
- c) Dogs of breed listed below that is born with a non-naturally full-length tail **may participate** in shows and SBK conformation description.

Grupp 1                      australian shepherd, Australian stumpy tail cattle dog, berger des pyrenees, bouvier des Ardennes, bouvier des Flandres, gos d'atura catalá, hrvatski ovcar, miniature American shepherd, mudi, old English sheepdog, polski owczarek nizinny, schipperke, welsh corgi pembroke.

Grupp 2                      danish-swedish farmdog, English bulldog, Entlebucher sennendog

Grupp 3                      jack russel terrier, rat terrier, terrier brasileiro, tenterfield terrier

Grupp 5                      Karelian bear dog, Swedish vallhund

Grupp 6                      smålandsstövare

Grupp 8                      perro de agua espanol

Grupp 9                      bostonterrier, French bulldog, king Charles spaniel

**From this prohibition to participate in shows are the following exceptions:**

#### **Trials, competitions and behavioral assessments**

- Dogs born in a country where tail docking was allowed when it occurred, who has tails docked for health reasons or dogs born with a non-naturally full-length tail **may participate** in trials, competition and behavioral assessments
- Dogs born in a country where tail docking was **not** allowed when it occurred, **may not participate** in trials, competition and behavioral assessments

## **1.7 Doping and other undue circumstances**

Participating dog may not be injured or sick. Nor may the dog have been subjected to measures aimed at improperly altering its appearance, performance or character, intended to conceal signs of injury or illness.

It is the obligation of the person responsible for a dog to ascertain how a specific treatment or other measure may affect the eligibility of the dog to take part in a show, trial, competition or behavioral assessments.

Doping by a dog is regulated by the State Board of Agriculture regulations and general advice about training and competition with animals, *SVFS 2011:24 item number L17, chapter 7, §§1-2 and appendix 2 to these regulations.*

**In addition**, for detailed regulations outlining which treatments or actions that are not permitted in the SKK organization, see the National regulations against dog doping. Rules for applying for exemption can also be found from SKK organization's doping regulations. If the show committee/trial management/competition management decides to carry out tests with

the aim of investigating the issue of doping or other prohibited actions, the person responsible for a dog is obliged to make the dog in question available for testing and for any further examination resulting from the test. The manipulation of samples for doping analysis is forbidden.

### **Neutered male dogs/bitches**

- Male dog that has been surgically neutered, despite reason, is not allowed dispensation to participate in shows or SBK conformation descriptions. They will instead be assigned Disqualified respective not approved.
- Male dog that has been surgically neutered are granted general dispensation to take part in trials, competitions and behavioral assessments. At international trials and competitions specific requirements for testicular status may occur – for information regarding this see the specific regulations for the trial or competition.
- Male dog that has been neutered by medical treatment is not allowed a dispensation for participating at shows, SBK conformation description, trials, competitions or behavioral assessments.
- Bitch that has been neutered by continuously medical treatment or surgical treatment is allowed a general dispensation for participation at shows, SBK conformation description, trials, competitions or behavioral assessments. See also the National regulations against dog doping.



## 2. General rules for Freestyle competitions

### Introduction

Freestyle is a dog sport that gives the handler the opportunity to show free-form obedience programs to music. The sports format makes it possible to take advantage of the individual qualities of the dog and show the result of positive dogtraining with focus on joy, contact, attentiveness and cooperation in focus. A key issue is that freestyle should be fun for both dog and handler.

The sport often strikes a chord with the audience thanks to the variation between programs, the joy and cooperation between handler and dog, and the presence of music.

In freestyle, both a quality judging and a competitive judging are made at the same time. The quality judging is based on the dog's points and can result in certificates and/or titles (regardless of the results of the other contestants). The contestants are also ranked against each other based on their overall scores and a winner is pronounced.

There are two disciplines in freestyle: Freestyle and Heelwork-to-Music (HtM). The freestyle classes have very few restraints regarding the design of the routine. The HtM classes revolve mainly around a number of pre-defined heeling positions (there are 10 to choose from).

The rules are designed so all breeds can compete on the same terms and so that the welfare of the dog can be guaranteed.

Chapter 1 lists parts of the SKK rules, these are valid for all dog sports under the KC.

### 2.1 Who may arrange a freestyle or HtM competition?

A club within the SKK-organization has the right to arrange a freestyle or HTM-competition after submitting a correct application to Svenska hundfreestyleklubben, SHFK.

### 2.2 Applying to arrange a competition

Application should be made to the SFHK. Application should reach SFHK at least six months before the intended date of the competition. Dispensation for shorter application times **may be** possible due to special reasons at SFHK discretion. Information about how to apply can be found on the SFHK web site. No more than two instances of the same class are allowed per day. In class I and II, it is **recommended** to replace at least one of the judges between classes of the same type. In class III it is **required** to replace at least one of the judges between classes of the same type. If a class have many competitors, after the time for application is closed, can be divided in two groups with separate list of results. You can use different judges in group A and group B.

### 2.3 Competition results

Results from official classes are registered with the SKK. The organiser of a competition is obligated to store a complete list of the results and addresses of competitors for at least two years.

## 2.4 Rules for participation

All dogs may compete in freestyle, this includes unregistered and cryptorchid dogs. The dog must be at least 12 months old at the day of the competition. If the following rules are not followed, the dog's result will be stricken off.

### For registered dogs:

- When registering for a competition, the dogs' registered name, and registration number must be included. Any dog competing under false credentials will be stricken from the competition along with its results.
- A dog owned by a Swedish resident must be registered with the SKK by the end of the application time for the competition.
- For a dog owned by the resident of a country other than Sweden a copy of the registration papers must be sent to the SKK Registry to be filed in the SKK database before entering the competition.
- A foreign dog, part-owned by a Swedish resident, must be registered by SKK by the end of the application time for the competition.

### For unregistered dogs

- An unregistered dog must have a competition permit (tävlingslicens, TAVLIC) from the SKK. When entering a competition, the TAVLIC-number is entered/filed instead of a registration number. This also applies to a dog owned by someone in a foreign country.

### Membership

The handler must at the day of the competition be a member in a SKK-affiliated club, or a recognized foreign Kennel Club.

### Foreign teams

A team from another country must be able to support its claim of in which class they are qualified to compete, through a letter or printout of results from their recognized Kennel Club or freestyle organization.

In order to register results from a dog owned by a resident in a country other than Sweden, the dogs' information must be filed in the SKK data base.

### Competitor with special needs

Competitors with special needs, for example disabilities, can apply for dispensation from SHFK. Application for dispensation should be applied if the need for aid or adjustments that goes beyond the standard rules. The application is only applied for at one time and if approved is valid until further notice. The dispensation should be showed to the organizer if asked for. It's the competitor's responsibility to provide the dispensation and to contact the organizer in connection with the application for the competition and to notify what needs there are.

## 2.5 Entry and fees

The instructions to enter a competition are available at the web site of the SHFK, [www.shfk.se](http://www.shfk.se). An application to enter and the starting fee should be available to the organizers

on the last day of the application period, at the latest. If the application is incomplete, incorrect, late or the fee not paid, the organizers may deny the team from entering the competition. A dog can compete once per arranged class. The organizer has the right to limit the number of competitors in one or more classes by assigning available places through a random draw. This method can only be used in classes I and II. The teams who could not be offered a place must be notified at latest two weeks before the date of the competition.

A foreign owned dog must enter the same class as it should compete in according to its home country's rules.

### **Refunding**

An entered fee is refunded if

- a) A dog can't enter due to circumstances caused by the arranging club (see 2.4 for exceptions).
- b) Entry is denied e.g. due to too many entries, that the dog is not eligible for entry, or that application/fee arrived too late.
- c) If a handler chooses to withdraw an application because the dog has gone into heat and sends in a written certificate, the fee for the competition should be returned by the organizer. A template for the certificate is available for download on the SHFK web site.
- d) The dog is sick/injured and the owner can support this by a certificate from a veterinarian.
- e) The handler is sick/injured and can support this by a certificate from a doctor.

The arranger may also decide to refund for other reasons, e.g. kennel cough quarantine or injury/veterinarian treatment without formal documents.

Certificates should be available for the organisers no later than eight days from the competition date. Refunds should be made within 4 weeks from the competition date.

## **2.6 Bitch in heat**

A bitch in heat is normally allowed to participate in a competition, but the circumstances may vary depending on the practical options available to the organizer.

When a bitch in heat competes, she is required to wear hygiene pants.

The organizer shall state in the invitation to the event what rules will apply to bitches in heat. A bitch in heat may only be kept at specific areas, specified by the organiser, throughout the competition. A bitch in heat will start in here ordinary place in start list of competitors. The competitor should inform the show manager that the bitch is in heat as soon as possible, and at the very latest the day before the competition.

The organizing club may decide that that bitches in heat cannot participate if the venue that is used for the competition do not allow bitches in heat (e. g. a rented space). The organizer shall then clearly state in the invitation to the competition that bitches in heat are not eligible for participation.

## **2.7 Restart**

If a competitor feels he/she has been disturbed by a technical problem during the routine (e.g. music started/stopped too early/late or a dog walking into the ring), the competitor can ask for a restart of the program. Such a request should be made to the head judge as soon as possible after the routine, preferably before the judges have started marking the routine. The head judge decides if a restart is permitted or if the routine should be judged as performed. A restart does not have to take place immediately, the team can get some preparation time before the restart e.g. through providing the team with a later start number.

## **2.8 Complaints**

The purpose of a complaint is to invalidate a result, e.g. if a dog participated without being qualified in the class.

Complaints cannot be made against the decisions made by judges.

A complaint can only be made by a handler who competed in the same class as the team the complaint concerns. A complaint should be made to the show manager within 10 min of the last start in that particular class. The complaint must then be handed in in writing within 30 min from the end of the class. Complaints are handled by the show manager.

Complaining fee must be paid when handing in a protest, if the complaint is deemed to be valid, the complaining fee is refunded. If complaining fee is not paid, the complaint shall be rejected. Information regarding the size of the complaining fee can be found at the SHFK web site [www.shfk.se](http://www.shfk.se).

An invalidation of or change of a result can be taken into consideration if

1. A complaint is made by a competitor who is affected by the result in question
2. A question is raised by the judges of the class, the show manager or other helpers
3. SKK decides to try the result

Rejected complaint can be appealed to the SHFK. An appeal shall be made in writing and be available to the SHFK at the latest one week from the end of the competition.

## **2.9 Officials**

### **Judges**

A freestyle judge must be authorised by the SHFK. A freestyle judge must be a member of a club within the SKK organization or an organization of a recognized foreign Kennel Club. If the judge is from a country other than Sweden, authorization is required from that nation's organizations via SKK. Information about enlisting foreign judges is available from SHFK:s web site.

At a competition at least two judges are used per class. Each judge makes her/his own judgement of a team routine. The judges should be placed just outside the ring where the view of the entire ring is a good as possible. They should be placed on the same side of the ring and preferably on separate tables. The organiser should release information about who will be judging the competition at least one week before the application time runs out, changes is allowed.

The judge should be at the competition at least 30 minutes before the given time for the judging to start.

The organiser will name one of the judges “head judge”. This judge has the final say regarding disqualification during a routine, restarts for technical reasons etc.

A judge is allowed to stop a performance if a dog is injured or if it is otherwise obviously not fit to perform the routine. If the judges are not in agreement, the head judge makes the decision.

A judge may compete and judge on the same day. The judge may **not** however compete for judges they will serve with, or have served with.

### **Person to contact**

In the information to the competitors, a contact person for the competition shall be named.

### **Show manager**

The show manager must be authorised by SHFK and be a member of a club within the SKK organization.

The show manager is responsible for making sure the results are reported properly (according to instructions on [www.shfk.se](http://www.shfk.se)) and within 8 days of the competition. The show manager is also responsible for:

- Handling complaints.
- Answering questions regarding organisational issues from contestants and others at the competition.
- Act if a competing handler and/or dog behaves badly (in such a way that it requires reporting to the SKK).
- Making sure the planning of the area around the ring, especially during passage in and out of the ring, allows for enough distance to avoid risky meeting between dogs.

A competition can have several show managers during a day, e.g. in different classes. A show manager may compete and preside on the same day but not in the same class. (If there are several classes of the same level on the same day, it is ok to compete in one of the other classes at the same level).

## **2.10 Payment and reimbursements for officials**

Judges and show managers are issued a payment according to the present tariff. Apart from the payment, they are reimbursed for travel, food and lodging costs. The present tariff can be found at [www.shfk.se](http://www.shfk.se).

## **2.11 The ring and sound system**

It's recommended that the ring be 20x20 meters. The size of the ring as well as the “flooring” (grass, wood, carpet etc.) should be announced in the competition invitation. The ring should be marked with two separate markings, the inner one for the actual ring and an outer one (2 m outside of the first) giving some free space between the ring and the audience. Two markings are not necessary when the ring is defined by a wall or a fence.

A dog is not allowed in the ring before it should compete. They are not allowed to enter the ring after it has been put in order for a competition. A dog is only allowed in the ring when they compete.

The organiser must supply a sound system.

## **2.12 Music**

The organizer decides how and when the music should be delivered – in advance or on the site of the competition. The organizer also decides what information about the music should be included. The competitor is encouraged to state the length of the music.

The competitors are allowed to change their music up until the time the organizers set as a limit. This limit may not be before the day of the competition. The competitors are responsible for only using legally obtained music.

The organizer should in the competition invitation state what format the music should have.

The arranger should test the music handed in in the sound system before the start to reduce the probability of technical errors.

## **2.13 Consideration at the competition site**

- Competitors must show respect to each other by avoiding disturbing warmup or training near the show ring. Use of a clicker or squiking toys are not appropriate.
- Keep distance between the dogs so they don't disturb each other.
- It's the competitor's responsibility to know and follow the rules for tests and competitions and the local organizers instructions. If the competitor does not follow the rules or in other way behaves inappropriately can the judge exclude the competitor from further participation during the current day.
- Show respect to each other around the ring, especially when around the entry and exit of the showing.

## **3. Classes, qualifying and merits**

A class is official, regardless of the number of contestants, if it has been applied for, approved and advertised in the correct way.

### **3.1 Classes**

Freestyle and HtM is divided into three classes: I, II and III (corresponding to Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced). The demands on the performance is gradually increased from class I to III. (See ch. 7, 8) To move up to a more advanced class, the team has to get a qualification score. (See ch. 4.3) The winner of a class is the team with the highest average score (See ch. 6).

## **3.2 Equal points**

If two or more teams have the same score, the dog with the highest points in the category *Precision and teamwork* wins. If the teams are still equal, the dog with the most points in category *Musical interpretation* wins.

If the teams still cannot be separated by their score, the head judge's total score determines which dog who wins. If it's still a draw, the head judge's score in *Precision and teamwork* determines the winner. In case that is also equal, it's the head judge's score in *Musical interpretation* that is checked. If the teams still are equal, it will be determined to be a draw.

## **3.3 Qualifying**

In order to move to a more advanced class the dog must have received a qualifying score in an official competition. In the Advanced class a qualifying score is called a certificate. If a dog gets an average score of at least 7,5 points in EACH of the three categories, the dog is qualified to move to a more advanced class. The qualifying score is awarded to the dog, not the handler or team. A handler chooses at his/her own discretion when a dog that has a qualifying score moves to the next class. If the dog has only one qualifying score in a class, it cannot move up until the following day.

Once a dog has started in a more advanced class it may not return to the less advanced class.

A dog registered with the SKK that has foreign merits from official competitions qualifying it for a higher class in another country is also allowed to compete in the higher class in Sweden.

## **3.4 Certificates**

Certificates in freestyle and HtM are awarded in class III to a dog, registered with the SKK, that achieves a qualifying score (an average score of at least 7,5 points in each of the three scoring categories). Certificates are awarded even if the dog is already a champion in the sport or has a diploma in class III of freestyle or HtM. Certificate rosette shall be awarded to a dog who achieves a qualifying score, and who is not yet a champion. Champion rosette shall be awarded to a dog who becomes a Champion, the organizing club shall provide the rosettes.

## **3.5 Diplomas, Titles and Champion Title**

If a dog gets three qualifying scores in the same class (see ch 3.3) – class I (Beginners) or class II (Intermediate), the dog is awarded a diploma in this class. Diplomas in Beginners and Intermediate classes can be won both by pedigree dogs and non-pedigree dogs. The diplomas are called FDI, FDII, HtMI and HtMII.

A dog that is registered in the SKK or a recognized foreign Kennel Club, can be awarded a Swedish freestyle champion title (SE FreeCH) or Swedish heelwork to music champion title (SE HtMCh). For details, see the SKK *Rules for awarding champion titles*.

A non-pedigree dog that otherwise fulfil the criteria for certificates or championship title, will instead receive a freestyle diploma (FDIII) or heelwork to music diploma (HtMIII)

## **4. In the ring and disqualification**

### **4.1 Length of the routine**

The same limits apply to both freestyle and HtM.

*Class I (Beginners):* At least 1 min, at the most 2 min.

*Class II (Intermediate):* At least 2 min, at most 3 min.

*Class III (Advanced):* At least 3 min, at most 4 min.

### **4.2 Preparations before start**

The team is not allowed in the ring until the judges is ready to start the judging.

The teams is under judging from the moment they enter the ring until they have left the ring.

The team is under judging even though the program is not scored if for instance the competitor has chosen to disqualify itself.

The team should be ready to enter the ring when given the signal to do so by an official. Once in the ring, the routine should start as soon as possible, it should start within 30 seconds. If the dog is not under control and the times goes beyond 30 seconds the judges has the right to demand the team to start their routine.

The dog must not be leashed inside the ring. If the dog is wearing a collar the handler must not lead the dog by the collar. While in the ring, the dog must be in the handlers control and no reason for disqualification may occur.

The program and performance is judged during the time the music is played, with the exception of things that can lead to disqualification. (See ch 4.7, disqualification)

### **4.3 Props**

Props of different kinds may be used during the routine but they must have a function and not be used as a reward in the ring. Free standing props have to be used by the dog, props that the handler is having in their hands or on their body does not have to be used by the dog. Prop that is not used by the dog gives maximum -0,5 deduction. If a prop is used as a reward in the ring it leads to disqualification. If the dog chews or in other way is careless with the props its being judged as other misses in the routine and gives deduction in the category execution.

The handler (but not the dog) may enter the ring before the start signal is given (but after the previous contestant has left the ring) and place the props.

If the handler wishes, another person may place, and/or remove, the props in the ring.

Placing and removing props in the ring should be done as quickly as possible.

### **4.4 Collars, coats etc**

The dog may not wear a leash while in the ring. The dog may wear a collar but the collar may not be so big that it reaches the dogs shoulders. A dog with long fur may wear a discrete and functional hair ribbons etc.

If a contestant is unsure of the judges' view on what the dog is wearing, they are allowed to contact the judges before the class starts and get an opinion.



## 4.5 Rewards

The handler is allowed to have treats or toys hidden e.g in a pocket but the reward must not be visible to the dog or the judges during the routine. The reward can be used when the routine is over and the team has left the ring. If the dog is rewarded with treat or toy in the ring, the team will be disqualified.

If the handler chooses to voluntarily end the program a toy reward may be used in the ring. If the handler rewards the dog with treats in the ring, the handler gets disqualified from all starts during that day.

Its allowed to pet the dog in a encouraging purpose in the ring before and after the routine. It is also allowed to pet the dog during the routine but it can lead to a deduction in the category execution.

## 4.6 End of a routine

The routine ends when the music ends. The handler decides when this happen by stating the length of the routine when turning in the music to the competition. If the music is not shut off at the designated time, the handler may end the program with a clear end pose.

Handler who decides to voluntarily end the routine prematurely should signal this to the judges. As a competitor, you have the right to finish your program as a training exercise, even if you have decided to end it prematurely.

## 4.7 Disqualification

Reasons to disqualify a team in the general competition area:

- The handler behaves badly towards the judge, another official or another contestant. The handler shall then be reprimanded by the judge and if this is not followed, the team will be rejected of the competition site. This decision can be questioned by a written protest. A written protest is tried afterwards and the judges decision at the competition applies at the time in question. Inappropriate behavior or language before, during or after the competition will lead to disqualification of all the competitors result during that day.
- The handler treats the dog in a harsh, compelling or unkind way
- The dog exhibits unacceptable behaviour as defined in ch 1.5.

Reasons to disqualify a team (in the ring):

- Dog is not under the handlers control
- Dog is carried into or out of the ring
- Dog or handler enters the ring without permission
- Dog eliminates in the ring
- A third party helps the dog or handler during the routine
- The length of the routine is over or under the limits for the class
- Prop in the ring is used as a reward for the dog.
- Judges can see the toy or treat during the routine
- Dog is rewarded, after the routine ends, in a way forbidden according to ch 4.5
- Dog is wearing something the judges find offensive
- Dog is wearing a leash in the ring
- The handler chooses to voluntarily end the routine according to ch 4.6

- The handler acts or dresses in a way that the judges find offensive or the judges find the music as offensive.
- If the dog after the routine runs out of the ring and picks up its reward and then runs back in the ring. But if the dog only runs out of the ring and then back in (without a reward) does not lead to disqualification.
- A dog is not allowed to wear a leash in the ring. If the competition is held in a enclosed ring the handler is allowed ( for safety) to hold the dog in its collar when they open the gate to go out of the ring.
- The judges has the right to cancel a performance if the dog is injured or exhibits obvious inability to perform.

Other reasons to disqualify:

- The dog's participation is a violation of the SKK doping rules
- A dog competing under faulty entry information will have its result cancelled.
- In the case of a disqualification during a routine due to the handler treats the dog in a harsh, compelling or unkind way or the dog demonstrate unacceptable behavior (according to ch 1.5) or the dog is injured the music should be stopped and the handler should be asked to see the head judge to be informed by this and of any continued competition that day.

## 4.8 Non-disqualifying faults

In these cases the dog is not disqualified but points will be deducted:

- A dog can make noises without losing points. However, if a dog barks through most or all of the routine up to 1.0 points can be deducted. Single noises or noises in single movements does not give any deduction. The deduction is made from the total score.
- Moves which are considered unsound (specified in the judges instructions) or a danger to the dog
- The handler forcefully keeps the dog in a position
- The handler pushes/pokes/touches the dog with the intention of correcting the dog, getting it to move in the right direction or turn its attention towards the handler.
- If the dog unintentionally ends up outside the ring but continues to work with its handler no deduction is made. If the dog leaves the ring during the show and no longer is under the handlers control it can lead to disqualification.
- The handler is not allowed to try to influence the assessment during the time the handler is in the ring by for example wear clothes or other things that can show of past successes.

## 4.9 Accounting for deduction

In the "deduction box", the deduction is made for barking. The deduction is made from the totalscore and does not effect the score in the individual categories.

## 4.10 Unhealthy, harmful movements

Unhealthy and harmful movements for the dog must give at least 2.6 points in deduction in the content category. Pictures 1-5 shows examples of movements that always lead to point deduction. For picture 6 the judge decide from a case-by-case basis whether the deduction

should be made. Other movements than those in the picture can also lead to point deduction if the judge find them unhealthy or harmful.



1. The handler stands up straight, the dog balancing on top of the handler. Deduction at least 2,6 p.



2. The dog stands on its front legs with its nose on the ground with no support for the hindlegs. With support it's OK. Deduction at least 2,6 p.



3. The dog balances on the handler's feet when the handler lying on its back. Deduction at least 2,6 p.



4. The dog stands still or walks on its front legs without support for the hindlegs. Deduction at least 2,6 p.



5. Somersault forward or backward. Deduction at least 2,6 p.



6. Walking or jumping on the hindlegs can lead to deduction if the judge assesses that the dog can not cope of the load in a good way. Walking on the hindlegs can never be exaggerated.

It is allowed to touch and/or carry the dog in the program if there is a choreographic purpose and as long as the dog is not held in a compelling position. However the dog must be in motion for most of the program and should therefore not be carried for more than a short sequence.

## 5. Categories and points

The assessment is a weighting of the teams good and less good performance during the individual start. The team is judged after the standard in each class. Freestyle and HtM is judged in three categories:

- *Precision and teamwork* – how the routine is performed right then and there, how well the dog’s movements/positions are performed, and how well handler and dog cooperates.
- *Content* – the content of the routine, the combination of moves/positions, technical quality of the routine, planning and choreography of the routine and how well it suites to the team
- *Musical Interpretation* – how well the judge feels the routine fits with the music and the team, how well the teams movements are synchronized to the music’s rhythm accents and phrasing are utilized.

It is the dog and its performance that is the main focus of the judging.

In each of the categories, the maximum is 10 points. The judges use one decimal (e.g. 7.6 p). The dog’s final score is the sum of points from all judges and all categories, divided by the number of judges. Two decimals are used for the final score (e.g. 23.75 p). The highest score achievable is 30 points.

The judging categories are the same for Freestyle and HtM and points are awarded according to the instructions below, freestyle specific rules are found in ch 6, and HtM-specific rules in ch7.

**Precision and teamwork (0,0-10,0 p)**

In this category the judges consider precision in movement and positions, cooperation between dog and handler, as well as the overall impression of the team..

**Precision**

The dog’s movements/positions are crisp, and performed with good precision. The routine is performed without accidental interruptions.

**Cooperation**

The dog and the handlers attentiveness to each other and their display of positive teamwork is judged. The dog works willingly and with dedication, following the handlers’ commands so there is no need for command repetition to get the dog through moves/positions. The handler’s commands are discreet and/or worked into the choreography regardless if they are voice, body language and/or commands using props.

**Overall impression**

*Overall impression* – Handler and dog are working as a team. The dog is comfortable in the ring.

Other things regarding precision and teamwork can also affect the judging.

**Instructions for assessment  
Standard for the category:**

- The dog seems to thrive in the ring
- The dog willingly follows the handlers signals
- The dog and the handler shows a good teamwork
- The dog performs tricks/positions on the handlers signal
- The dog works concentrated
- The dog is in focus in the routine
- The dog and the handler are attentive to each other
- The dog performs movements in a clear way
- The routine is performed with flow and without unintentional interruptions
- The handler´s behaviour is suitable

**For higher scores:**

- The team performs the routine with commitment
- The dog shows good endurance
- The routine is performed with flow and without mistakes and unintentional interruptions
- the dog performs tricks and positions with precision
- the handlers signals are cooperated into the routine

**For lower scores**

- the dog does not look comfortable in the ring
- the dog does not perform movements on the handlers signals
- exaggerated signals in the purpose to show/lure the dog to perform
- lack of teamwork
- the dog sniffs on the floor
- the dog or the handler loses focus
- unintentional interruptions that stops the flow in the routine
- the handler touch the dog steer, calm or get the attention from the dog. Corrections can lead to big deductions or disqualification
- the handler use hard/harsh commands
- the handlers behavior is not suitable
- forced movements, for instance the handler holds on to the dog, carry the dog when its obvious that the dog wants down or the handler holds the dog with its legs in position 9 or 10

**Content (0,0-10,0 p)**

In this category the judges consider the choice of moves /positions in the routine, how they have been put together, and the technical and choreographical difficulty of the routine in relation to the level of class. Technical difficulty relates to the number and type of moves/positions and how well the dogs' capacity for independent work is shown. Choreographical difficulty relates to how moves/positions are tied together to

a whole and how the flow is maintained throughout the routine. The routine should feel like a whole and not like movements stacked on each other.

Below is a summary of what awards high scores.

### **The length of the routine**

To be rewarded with qualifying scores the length of the routine should provide space to show endurance and variety.

Other things regarding the content of the routine can also affect the judging.

Standard for the category:

- the routine has enough variety of movements for the class
- movements and transitions fit well together and create a nice flow
- movements are adapted to the dog's build, breed, etc.
- the dog is in focus in the routine
- the ring surface is well used in relation to the dog's conditions
- any prop fulfils a purpose

For higher score:

- the routine has a good balance between the dog and the handler where the dog is in focus
- the team shows endurance
- the ring surface is well used in relation to the dog's conditions  
the routine shows good variety, in speed, different tricks/positions, directions and distance
- the routine is interesting to watch and shows creativity in composition
- the routine is built so that the dog is given the opportunity to show evidence of independent work
- prop is used in different ways and multiple times during the routine
- the handler highlights the dog's unique characteristics in the program
- the routine is structured so that the dog during the predominant part of the program is shown to the judges

For lower score:

- the handler's clothes or music is disturbing/offensive or takes focus from the dog. Deduction 0,1-10 points, can result to disqualification
- a routine that has more than allowed freestyle in HtM or vice versa. Deduction 2,6 points
- unhealthy or harmful movements that is planned in the routine. Deduction 2,6-10 points
- if the planning does mean that the dog does not have a central role during the most of the program. Deduction 2,6 – 10 points
- exaggerated signals or helps for instance targets and handsignals that takes focus from the routine or the dog
- props that fill no function. Deduction 0,1-0,5 points
- props that only is used as stations to perform tricks or is not incorporated in the routine.

- Props that falls apart or interrupt the dogs work
- Props that the dog does not want to leave or not give to the handler
- The team does only use a small part of the ring
- If the dogs movement is not visible to the judges
- The routine is to difficult for the dog

### **Musical interpretation (0,0-10,0 p)**

In this category the judges consider how well the moves/positions have been adapted to the chosen music, how well the movements are timed to the music and the degree of which the routine follows the music. In addition, it relates to how well the chosen music is suited the dog. Below is a summary of what awards high scores.

#### **Choreography suited to the music**

The moves and/or positions should be adapted to the music, its pace and content. The structure of the music is used in the choreography.

#### **Timing**

The dogs' moves/positions is timed to the music, i. e, changes in the music is reflected in the routine in a way that is relevant to the level of the class. This can be shown in many ways, e. g.

- letting the moves/positions follow changes in the music's' tempo
- shifting between moves/positions in a way that follows the music's' phrasing
- Letting accents in the music reflect in the dogs moves/positions (e. g. That the dog stops when the music pauses or moves faster/with greater intensity during a crescendo.)

#### **Suitable music**

The music has been chosen to fit the dog.

Other things regarding the musical interpretation of the routine can also affect the judging.

Standard for the category:

- The movements are composed to suit the changes in the music
- The music is adapted to the dog
- The music is also followed during movements performed with props

For higher score:

- Tempo and movements fit well with the feeling and tempo of the music
- Events in the music are clearly amplified
- The routine is timed for pieces, phrasing and accents in the music
- The team captures the feeling and mood of the music

For lower score:

- The team does not succeed in showing that the program is adapted to the music

- Movements and transitions that are made without connection to the music

## 6. Freestyle-specific rules

In freestyle there are no obligatory moves. The parts of the routine taken up by HtM positions may not exceed 25%. If it does, points are deducted, at least 2,6 points in the category “content”. In freestyle, the quality of the HtM positions included in the routine are also judged. There are no requirement for a freestyle routine to contain any HtM positions.

The three classes are mainly separated by increasing demands in all three judging categories.

Higher scores are awarded a routine with few, well performed moves than a routine with many, less precise moves. To squeeze as many moves as possible into a routine can never be more important than interpreting the music.

### *Class I (Beginners):*

#### *Precision and teamwork:*

The cooperation between handler and dog should be good but doesn't have to be flawless to render qualification points.

#### *Content:*

In this class a program can be built around a few simple moves (approx 3-6) and simple transitions between moves. The content of the routine can be simple. With few movements shown, variation is desirable. Variation does not mean for instance go around the handler, go around a cane, go around a leg, go around a prop, as this is the same type of movements.

#### *Musical interpretation:*

The interpretation of the music can also be simple.

### *Class II (Intermediate):*

#### *Precision and teamwork:*

In this class the expectations are somewhat higher with regards to moves and transition. With precision means that the dog makes movements in a controlled way where it is clear that the dog enters the movement, makes the movement itself and ends the movement. In class II the expectations of precision and stamina are increased compared with class I.

#### *Content:*

To achieve qualification points takes a more elaborate routine where the dog is more independent of the handler in moves and transitions than in the lower class. The number and variety of movements should also be higher than in class I. In order to vary the content , an increased repertoire of movements are therefore needed.

#### *Musical interpretation:*

Compared to class I the demands on the planning of the routine and the musical interpretation are also increased. It must be clear that the dog and the handler follow the music, for example that movements, transitions and tempo changes are timed to the changes in the music or that the program follows the phrasing and tempo of the music.

### *Class III (Advanced):*

#### *Precision and teamwork:*



In this class the dog should be able to handle movements and transitions independently with or without the support of choreographed help and perform the movements clearly. That the dog has good concentration and focus on the task through most of the routine is also characteristic of the class.

*Content:*

The routine should in a large extent be perceived as a coherent whole. Higher demands are also placed on creativity and variety in the design of the routine. This class demands a well-developed program where examples of increased difficulty can be that the dog works with bigger distance from the handler, without eye contact with the handler or that the dog does one thing and the handler does another. Tempo changes and level differences between the dog and the handler are other things that can affect the degree of difficulty. The number and variation of movements also affects the degree of difficulty. In order to vary the content, an increased repertoire of movements are therefore needed.

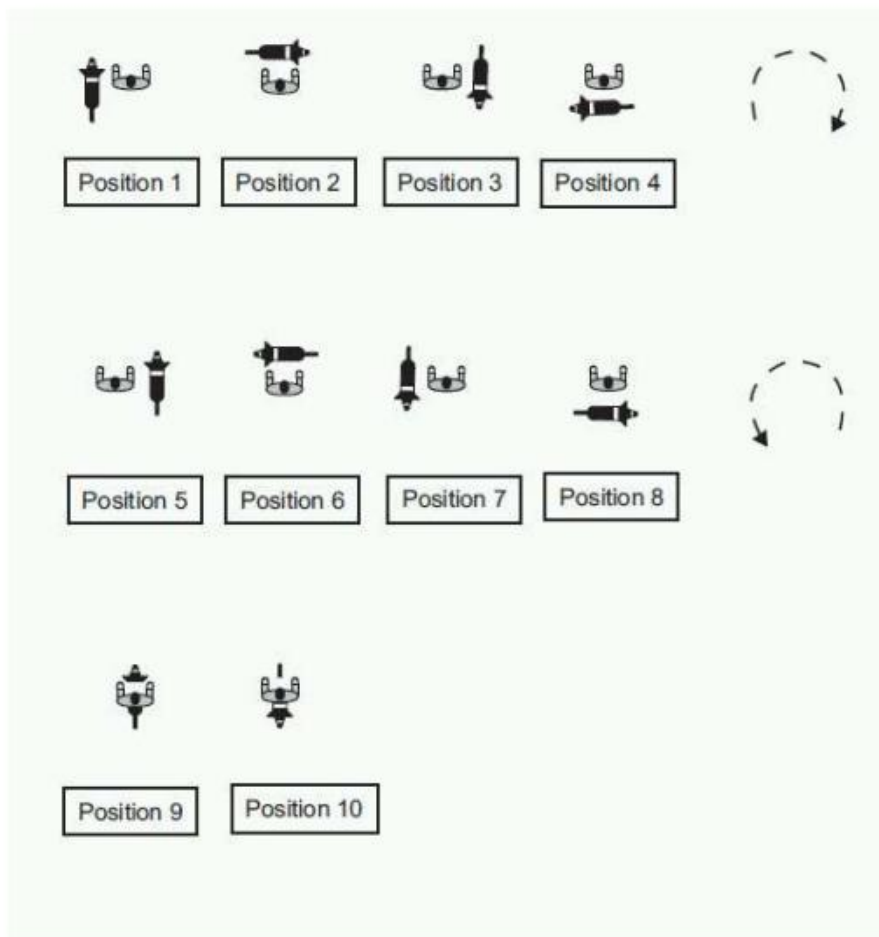
*Musical interpretation:*

It must be clear that the dog and the handler follow the music, for example that movements, transitions and tempo changes are timed to the changes in the music or that the program follows the phrasing and tempo of the music. It should be clear that the routine has been created to interpret the music in question. Emotions and the mood of the music should appear in the routine.

## **7. Special rules with regards to HtM**

In HtM at least 75% of the routine must consist of approved heelwork positions. Otherwise points will be deducted, at least 2,6 points in the category "content". In HtM the focus is on precision in the heelwork positions. In HtM the freestyle moves that are part of the routine are also judged. For a movement should be counted as a HtM position it is important that the dog has all four paws on the floor. Limping, crawling etc does not count as a HtM position. The handler can change her/his position.

The following heelwork positions are approved in the HtM-classes



Position 1: the dogs' right shoulder is by the handlers' left leg.

Position 2: the dog walks in front of the handler, with its right side towards the handler (right shoulder by the handlers' right leg)

Position 3: The dogs' right shoulder by the handlers' right leg, with the dog facing towards the handlers rear.

Position 4: the dog is walking behind the handler, with its right side towards the handler (dogs' right shoulder by handler left leg).

Position 5: The dogs left shoulder is by the handlers' right leg.

Position 6: The dog walks in front of the handler, with its left side towards the handler (dogs' left shoulder by the handlers' left leg).

Position 7: The dogs' left shoulder is by the handlers' left leg, with the dog facing the handler's rear.

Position 8: The dog walks behind the handler, with its left side towards the handler (with the dogs' left shoulder by the handlers' right leg).

Position 9: The dog is walking between the handlers' legs, its shoulders by the handlers' legs, facing the same direction as the handler.

Position 10: The dog is walking between the handlers' legs, its shoulders by the handlers' legs, facing the handler's rear.

These positions should be stable in motion. The dog should not jump/bounce, if it does a deduction should be made in the category "precision and teamwork". The dog's body should be straight and parallel to the handler. Except during sideways motions, the dogs back paws should move in line with the front paws. The dog should maintain the same distance to the handler in all positions. To count as a HtM-position the distance between dog and handler should not exceed 50cm. Tight positions should be awarded higher points than loose ones.

The three classes are mainly separated by increasing demands in all three judging categories.

Higher scores are awarded a routine with few, well performed positions than a routine with many, less precise positions. To squeeze as many positions as possible into a routine can never be more important than interpreting the music.

It is desirable that it is clear that it is the dog that changes position. It should therefore be clear that the dog knows the different positions, that it independently finds the position and stays in them. Routines where the dog continues in his line and the handler changes his/hers should therefore not be rewarded at the same degree as if the dog finds the position.

#### *Class I (Beginners):*

##### *Precision and teamwork:*

The cooperation between handler and dog should be good but doesn't have to be flawless to render qualification points

##### *Content:*

In this class a program can be built around a few positions (approx 1-3) and simple transitions between positions. If the routine is built around one position, this should be shown in different directions and tempo. The content of the routine can be simple.

##### *Musical interpretation*

The interpretation of the music can also be simple. There are no large demands to be inventive.

#### *Class II (Intermediate):*

##### *Precision and teamwork:*

There are somewhat higher expectations on numbers of and quality of positions. To get qualification points a more elaborate routine is needed where the dog is more independent of the handler in maintaining positions and making transitions. In class II the dog is expected to show one or more of the following:

- A capacity to stay in position during a change of directions
- A capacity stay in position during a change in tempo
- Stamina

##### *Content:*

In this class it requires a more elaborate routine where examples of increased difficulty can be sideways movements, moving backwards and tempo changes. The number and variety of movements should also be higher than in class I. In order to vary the content, an increased repertoire of movements are therefore needed. Here it is also desirable that the handler shows the dog to the judges and does not obscure the dog in positions and that the team shows transitions that makes the routine flow.

##### *Musical interpretation*

It must be clear that the team is in tune with the music, for example that transitions and tempo changes are timed to the music.

#### *Class III (Advanced):*

##### *Precision and teamwork*

In this class the dog should be able to handle movements and transitions independently with or without the support of choreographed help and perform the movements clearly. That the dog has good concentration and focus on the task through most of the routine is also characteristic of the class.

*Content:*

The routine should in a large extent be perceived as a coherent whole. Higher demands are also placed on creativity and variety in the design of the routine. This class demands a well-developed program where examples of increased difficulty can be that the dog independently holds the positions while the handler perform things that can be distracting as well as sideways movements and backwards movements. The number and variety of movements should also be higher than in class I. In order to vary the content, an increased repertoire of movements are therefore needed. Here it is also desirable that the handler shows the dog to the judges and does not obscure the dog in positions and that the team shows transitions that makes the routine flow.

*Musical interpretation*

It must be clear that the dog and the handler follow the music, for example that movements, transitions and tempo changes are timed to the changes in the music or that the program follows the phrasing and tempo of the music. It should be clear that the routine has been created to interpret the music in question. Emotions and the mood of the music should appear in the routine.

## **8. Comment to the competition rules**

The idea is that the sport should be characterized by a large measure of freedom for the creation of programs that suits the individuals. It is important to show creativity in making the best of the conditions that exist in the dog. An important goal is that all dog types should have the same conditions to practice and advance in the sport. Since different backgrounds, mentality and physical conditions characterize different dog types, there are no compulsory elements in any of the classes. The freedom and lack of strict framework also means that the assessment is necessary characterized of a certain degree of subjectivity. However, the goal for the judiciary remains to strive for a uniformity in the assessment where the dogs conditions are taken into account.